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Staff, Hilltop, "The Hilltop 3-25-1983" (1983). *The Hilltop: 1980-90*. 74.
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The Stilltop

A Voice Of The Howard University Student Body

Vol. I
No. 1

March 25, 1983

HILLTOP CANCELLED

Hilltop Editor Alleges Administration Misappropriated Hilltop Funds

Dear Ms. McKnight:

A sub-committee created March 15, 1983 by the *Hilltop* Board was charged with determining the financial status of *The Hilltop*; projected expenditures for future publications; possible sources of funding and; empowered to suspend production of the newspaper if necessary, pending full Board approval.

The sub-committee consisting of Mr. Keith Toussaint, Ms. Derida Williamson, yourself and me met on the morning of March 16, 1983 to review data available. Each of us had assignments which were to be brought to the next meeting scheduled for 5:00PM today. Neither Ms. Williamson, nor you appeared at the meeting.

At its meeting March 18, 1983 those members present voted that as a result of the Sub-committee's inability to secure the information needed to determine the financial future of the newspaper and based upon the fiscal data currently available, future production of *The Hilltop* be suspended, effectively immediately. (sic)

Sincerely,

Sub-Committee on Financial
Status of *The Hilltop*

Raymond W. Archer, III
Secretary

Citing indebtedness as the reason, in an unprecedented move Tuesday night, *The Hilltop* Policy Board voted to suspend the publication of the *Hilltop* until an interim financial audit has been conducted to determine the status of the paper.

Raymond Archer, director of Student Activities, stated that his records show the *Hilltop* with a \$20,000 printing debt, a projected payroll need of \$6,500 and only a balance of \$1,000 in the present account.

"Our records indicate that the *Hilltop* is more than \$19,000 in the red. At this point we need to be cautious because, assuming the figures are correct, we would really be in a fix if we tried to continue printing the paper," said Archer.

Editor-in-Chief Janice McKnight refuted Archer's

figures and commented that his figures were incorrect.

"In our budget there was a contingency in the amount of \$7,192 and a credit of \$7,271 that Raymond Archer told me could not be touched or withdrawn without the request of the *Hilltop* to the Policy Board. We didn't request it to be spent or used, but have been informed that it has been spent," said McKnight.

McKnight said when she heard the paper was running out of money, she requested the reserves, but was told by Archer that the money was a "paper tiger," existing only on paper but not in fact.

McKnight asked the Board, that since it was not unusual for the paper to run out of money, why the *Hilltop* was not contacted of its debts listed in the Office of Student Activities reports, sooner than

the last meeting.

"It is not an usual trend for the paper to run out of money. Last year's *Hilltop* survived on an advance of their projected advertising income. I had no idea as to what your ad income was until last week," said Archer.

Policy Board chairman Keith Toussaint commented that even if the *Hilltop* received an advance it still would not have enough money to function.

Archer said *The Hilltop* didn't have a contract with the printing firm, for the second semester, because his office only signed a purchase order for the Fall semester, which ended December '82.

"We only signed it through December because, normally, first semester ad revenue covers the second semester's bills," said Archer.

Hilltop Budget Director Derida Williamson confirmed

the printing debt as \$18,500.

Commenting on the payroll debt of \$5,591.65 Williamson stated that there have been many times when a *Hilltop* staff member had their time report sent to the payroll office but was not paid. She said that she would send in another time sheet for the same time period, and the payroll office would eventually make the proper paycheck out. While the waiting process was occurring, the Office of Student Activities, received all the duplicate sheets and withdrew the amounts from the *Hilltop* account.

"The Office of the Comptroller has been taking money out of our accounts to pay bills which come to them without ever notifying us," McKnight said in a later interview.

According to Wilbur Jones, university comptroller, the *Hilltop* should receive a copy of a transaction report each month, as well as a status report showing the balance in the account and how much money has been expended at the time.

"As far as I know, the Office of Student Activities receives the copy and forwards it to the *Hilltop*," Jones explained.

This year all student organizations received a two percent increase in their budgets, but, according to Carl Anderson, vice president of Student Affairs, the *Hilltop* did not receive an increase because its allotment is not based on the size of student enrollment.

"Suspending the newspaper should be second to gaining finances. We need to get our heads together to formulate ways to get more money," said Jean Claude, president of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Claude suggested taking money from individual school budgets and organizations, but was strongly opposed, by Estelle Taylor, Chairman of the English Department.

Taylor noted that the English Department barely has enough money to finance its own activities.

HUSA president Howard Newell stated that students have paid their student activity fee in good faith and that the *Hilltop* Policy Board must seek to uphold their interests by finding more funds.

Lionel Barrow, dean of the School of Communications offered to look into his school's budget to see if he could find funding.

A sub-committee, consisting of McKnight, Toussaint, Williamson and Archer were given the authority to suspend publication of *The Hilltop*, pending Board approval.

McKnight argued that the vote, was illegal because neither she nor Williamson

GAO Finds \$15 Million Error In HU Accounts

A government report states that the administration of Howard University "erroneously" accounted for how it spent \$15 million worth of federal funds in the fiscal year 1981.

Senator William Proxmire (D-Wis.), a member of the Senate Appropriations committee, asked the General Accounting Office to investigate Howard's use of federal funds in a letter dated Oct. 20, 1981.

In the report completed in March 1982, the General Accounting Office emphasized that it accepted Howard University's own figures for the report. That is, the GAO says it did not determine whether the expenses of the administration were justified.

During the investigation, Howard's accountants made adjustments of \$14.8 million to change the "erroneous" figure from \$29 million to \$14 million.

Proxmire's question was whether the university was actually spending the amounts reported in the separate academic and administrative categories as they had stated.

The report gains significance from Cheek's recent request for \$159 million from the federal government for the fiscal year 1984 and other events, including:

(1) Sex discrimination charges against the university's General Counsel's Office

(2) Charges that Howard's General Counsel gave his

secretary a raise of \$20,000 in four years and co-signed for her \$100,000 condominium.

(3) Pressure brought by the administration in an effort to prevent *The Hilltop* from carrying the stories on the sex discrimination charges.

(4) The expulsion of *Hilltop* editor Janice McKnight from the university.

(5) The firing of Michael Harris, a lawyer in the General Counsel's office who wrote the original sex discrimination charges in a letter-to-editor, printed in *The Hilltop*.

(6) Recent campus unrest stemming from McKnight's expulsion and climaxing in the takeover of the Administration Building and protests at the university's Charter Day ceremonies.

(7) The loss of a court case on Tuesday against Gabrielle Turgeon, a French teacher at the university, who sued for race discrimination. Turgeon won \$60,000.

(8) The loss of four court cases against the university within the last two years, totaling \$671,000.

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Administration vs. Education



(Continued on page 2)

Commentary...

Where Is The Money?

-There are no conscious people who are not in an organization. It is the people organized who are the true makers of history. You're either part of the problem or part of the solution.

-Malcolm X

The Howard University administration has finally succeeded in doing what they have been trying to do all along; stop the publication of the *Hilltop*.

Our elders know better than we that once you take away the tool for informing the people, they are no longer able to make intelligent and reasonable decisions about the quality of their lives.

So when the expulsion of Janice McKnight only angered the student body, and when the firing of university lawyer Michael Harris only raised questions, and the paper sought to print answers to those questions, they knew what they had to do.

It only made sense to get rid of the student newspaper when the administration realized what it could print and what sense literate, thinking students could make out of it.

The pieces might just start falling

into place, making a clearer, more indicting picture than the university could account for.

Maybe it was just a coincidence but just two weeks ago Raymond Archer informed the budget director of the paper, that the *Hilltop* was running out of money and that a subcommittee would be formulated to look into the matter and come up with correct figures and if need be solutions.

The committee consisted of Raymond Archer, director of student activities; Keith Toussaint, chairman of the *Hilltop* Policy Board; Derida Williamson, budget director for the *Hilltop*, and Janice McKnight, editor-in-chief of the *Hilltop*.

The subcommittee met once on Wednesday March 16 and agreed to meet once again on the 18th, but McKnight and Williamson argue that Archer failed to inform them of

the time of the meeting. McKnight said she couldn't understand why, when she was down at the *Hilltop* office all day long, until 9 p.m. that evening, to be exact, and Archer never contacted her.

Archer, however, says that McKnight, knowing that there was a meeting on the 18th, should have contacted him for the time and the place.

Regardless, however, on Monday March 20, McKnight received a hand delivered letter from Archer's office, informing her that since she had failed to meet him by 5 p.m.

Friday, he and Keith Toussaint had taken it upon themselves to suspend publication of the *Hilltop*, effective immediately.

Shocked at this turn of events, McKnight confronted Archer in his office about the letter, and she was told that the suspension was not concrete and could be overturned at the *Hilltop* Policy Board meeting the following night.

However, the following night, the *Hilltop* Policy Board voted to uphold the suspension, because they "did not want the paper to get in even more debt."

According to Raymond Archer, the *Hilltop* is \$25,000 in debt, and, that since university funds are depleted, The Paper will have to seek financial help from other sources.

According to the *Hilltop's* records, the paper is not in debt and has more than the \$1,000 Archer says it has. The *Hilltop* has noted the appearance of double-purchase orders, shifted funds, and misallocated monies.

Only an audit will reveal the truth; fortunately the Board thought so also, and called for one to be conducted over the spring break. Un-

fortunately, they claim that Howard's own accountants can do the job adequately, but we don't.

When the GAO investigated Howard in 1982, Howard's accountants had shifted \$15 million worth of funds to the wrong areas, and although those funds mysteriously found their way back to the right place after the investigating was completed, who's to say what will happen with this audit?

But more than that, what will happen to the student body? The *Hilltop* has been interrupted in its ability to tell its own story, and the stories of others. The difficulty is in not knowing what is truly going on. But then, was that not the plan?



Facts Revealed In 1981 U.S. General Accounting Office Report

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(9) The settlement of eight out-of-court cases since 1981, totaling more than \$250,000.

The report came on the heels of a request from Proxmire for the General Accounting Office to analyze administrative expenses at Howard "in order for the Appropriations Committee to make an informed decision regarding future appropriations for Howard...it is essential that we have a clear picture of how the university utilizes these funds."

A spokesperson in Proxmire's office said that the report was "old news". However, the GAO report explains that Howard officials "told us (GAO) that Howard's administrative expenses were also overstated for the previous two fiscal years...but that adjustments for those years (would) not be made."

Before the adjustments were made, data showed that the university was spending four to five times more for their administrative expenses than other institutions.

Writing that their analysis of Howard's expenditures were "directed to understanding the nature of the expenses and not to determine whether the expenses were justified or properly documented," the GAO

reported to Proxmire that Howard had overstated expenses to the National Center for Educational Statistics "by about \$15 million for the fiscal year 1981 primarily because they erroneously included certain employee fringe benefits and auxiliary enterprise expenses."

Each year Howard provides financial data to NCES as part of NCES' national collection of financial statistics on colleges and universities. Howard's annual reports to the NCES usually consists of monies spent for instruction, research, public service, student services, and operation of the physical plant, as well as scholarships and fellowships.

The NCES requests that colleges supplying financial data follow guidelines established by the National Association of College and University Business Offices (NACUBO) and the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA).

According to the guidelines, expenses related to the university's general executive and administrative offices should be charged to administrative support.

Expenses relating to the university's instruction activities should be charged to the instruction expenditure category. The guidelines also state that fringe benefits and

salaries should be added to categories that they correspond to.

For example, an instructor's salary and fringe benefits should be charged to the instruction expenditure category.

Finally, the guidelines recommend that the university allocate an appropriate portion of the administrative costs to "auxiliary enterprises," such as residence halls, food service, intercollegiate athletics, and colleges unions and all other entities that exist to furnish goods or services to students and faculty.

According to the document, Howard reported administrative expenses to NCES totaling \$29.3 million for the fiscal year 1981; a figure which represents 20 percent of its educational and general expenses for that year.

For the fiscal year 1980, the university reported spending \$37.5 million for administrative expenses or 23 percent of its educational and general expenses.

When the GAO approached Howard concerning the matter, Howard asked its certified public accountants to look into the matter, according to the document. However, the GAO adds that, it "relied on the work of Howard's certified public accountants as to

the integrity of the financial account."

"The accountants made an adjustment of about \$9.7 million to account for the improperly classified fringe benefits of non-administrative staff and other improperly classified expenses," the document reported.

The GAO reported that after making the proper adjustments, Howard's administrative expenses for the fiscal years 1980-1981 were the \$16 million and \$14 million, respectively, totaling about 11 percent and 10 percent of its educational and general expenditures.

According to the GAO findings, Howard submitted the adjusted amounts to NCES.

"Senator Proxmire used the report for background for the appropriations hearings for Howard University last year," said Marion Mayer of the Appropriations committee staff. "I think that he used it as the basis for a question on why the administrative expenses were so continually high."

"However, the GAO report found they had just given wrong information," added Mayer, who said that after the report was finished the figures "fell into line" with those of similar universities.

Mayer said that no follow-up reports had been done.

H.U. Loses Another Discrimination Suit

On Tuesday a U.S. District Court Jury awarded Gabrielle Turgeon, a former French Teacher at Howard University, \$60,000 in a suit charging race discrimination and breach of contract.

Amidst a five day trial, Turgeon alleged in her testimony that she had been replaced by a black faculty member with "lesser qualifications."

In January, U.S. District Court Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr., entered a judgement in her favor on the breach of contract charge

because she had been dismissed without review by a faculty committee," according to The Washington Post.

The jury of five blacks and one white awarded Turgeon \$25,300 on the discrimination charge, which was filed under the D.C. Human Rights Act, and \$34,700 for breach of contract.

According to her attorney, John M. Clifford, Turgeon is seeking damages and reinstatement under the U.S. Civil Rights law. Judge Robinson, said he will rule on this and her request for legal expenses at a later date.

Dear Mr. Newell

I am in receipt of your recent letter which enclosed information describing recent events concerning Howard University.

I, too, share your concern that federal appropriations received by Howard University be utilized in a proper manner and with the best interests of the Howard University student body in mind. Please know that I have been in contact with Howard University officials and have shared these same concerns with them. It is my sincere hope that differences between the University administration and the student body regarding Administration policies and procedures can be quickly resolved to the satisfaction of all concerned parties. Thank you for alerting me to your interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

LOUIS STOKES
Member of Congress

The Best time to fight for your freedom is before you lose it.

-Walter Rodney

Policy Board

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was contacted concerning the meeting, in which the voting took place.

According to the Policy Board, further action will be taken after the audit.